

It's Andy Gillies, the Spiritual Care Lead at the NHS Golden Jubilee.

So, my role, at work, is to oversee spiritual care, broadly, within the organisation, so that includes patients, family and staff. So, my role is to, to provide it on the ground, in the moment to people, so if somebody is particularly distressed or experiencing something that is really really hard in hospital, as people often are, then my job is to support them, but also to equip others to support them as well. But it includes patients, their families and carers, but also the staff that look after people too.

*Do you enjoy the work you do?*

Yeah, there is, there is so there is a joy to it because the work is difficult and the work takes, requires a lot of you at a deep level, but at the same time, it gives a rich amount of stuff back, so the, that word joy can mean, hedonistic joy, like just pleasure, just absolute, but it can also mean like rewarding and meaningful, and like, the work's really rewarding and really meaningful. And often you don't see the end of the story, but you step along at, at the side for a wee while, and it's a great pleasure to be in that wee moment, almost letting people go off and maybe be in a slightly better place, maybe desiring themselves to be better, rather than the moment that you meet them being the fix, you know where it's all great now, and that's also quite rewarding. And it's great when somebody comes back, you know maybe a year later, and you see that they've really developed and grown and, or they're more supported now than they were before.

*What is your workshop at the conference about?*

The workshop today is around about managing bereavement support in the workplace, predominantly for colleagues, colleague to colleague. Initially it started off that it was going to be for managers, best practice for managers, to support people in their team that have been bereaved, but actually what we realise is, people are more interested in 'How do I support my colleague who's bereaved?' rather than it just being managers that do it and rather than it being focused on HR policy, what can I do as a person to support my colleague who's in work, who's often in a healthcare setting, involved in work that involves death and dying and distressing stuff, or even just illness, like loss of being well. So that's the context of it, it's about supporting our colleagues in work around about bereavement. Takeaways, I hope, are people understand, it's a bit, bereavement is a little bit like, and the whole grief process, a little bit to me, like spaghetti, it's all over the place, quite difficult to understand and get your head round, and it's so different to everyone. So, one thing I'd like to help people with is, have a little bit of theory that just grounds them and says, okay, I can see where this person is, they're, in this place with it or they're in that place, so they understand better where the other is. It's a little bit about self-awareness, around about how do you see yourself in the world as a being and how do you see others, and how might that actually, wee bit of self-awareness makes you a better support to your colleagues? And then one of the other takeaways is about actually what to say and do. We know that actually only 7% of what you communicate comes from words so I've got a couple of exercises where people will practise an empathic face, and even just being able to

practise saying *'I'm sorry for your loss'* in a way that seems real and it's not an uncomfortable phrase to use – so that's my takeaways.

I think, like the, the national charter for bereavement care for people, and bereavement support, sets out that it's a human right to be supported in bereavement, but lots of us are really rubbish at doing it, and all of us can grow and all of us can get better, even the people who are so called experts in the field.

Having that, you hear that in medicine a lot, about having a growth mindset, but having the mindset of, I can always get better at this, but for some people they maybe have never supported someone through a bereavement before and so me this session ties into, how do you start off finding out where you are, how comfortable are you right now with providing support to other people and how might you actually develop and go on the journey, and not only that but, how might you, then like a ripple, spread that out throughout your organisation, throughout your team and throughout your life, because you know there's the professional and the personal, but to me, very few of us come into work and switch off the personal altogether, it's like, there's an integrated self, I think, that is worthwhile giving some support to. And I hope that this session will be one of many where the ripple of good care for each other starts.

*Is this an inspiring time for this agenda?*

Yeah, I think it is an inspiring time because, probably more so than ever, bereavement has been something that's spoken about, bereavement support is something that's acknowledged as being needed. I think it goes hand in hand with the stuff around about mental health, that mental health awareness is out there more, people can speak about it more openly and it is less stigmatised, broadly, but at the same time I do, I do worry about the danger of it, saying it, well it's out there, we're doing a little bit about it now so really that's, that's all we need to do. And it's how do we embed it and make it real and say that it's not just for the economic benefits for an organisation that we have staff back at work and supported but actually just that we treat human beings like human beings, and that they have the right to be supported when they need to be supported. So it's, so it's an inspiring time, I think, but I think there is so a challenge to then make it real, and make it held within organisations as something that is just as important; we talk about safe, effective and person-centred in the NHS, but, so this is not just seen as the nice person-centred bit but this is the safe bit. This is what it means to be an effective organisation, that we actually take this stuff seriously.

The film was produced in March 2020 and can be found at [www.sad.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.sad.scot.nhs.uk) or <https://vimeo.com/392429805>

For more information visit [www.sad.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.sad.scot.nhs.uk) or contact [supportarounddeath@nes.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:supportarounddeath@nes.scot.nhs.uk)

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